

**The
Holy Bible**

FOR

THE 21st CENTURY

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RELIGION AND REFORMATION

1 There are thousands of religious organizations in the United States alone. There are at least: 9 different Presbyterians, 11 kinds of Pentecostals, 12 Lutheran, 15 Mennonites, 23 Methodist and 30 different Baptist denominations! Not to mention the thousands of non-denominational churches springing up all around the country. Religions are as varied and diverse as the people who organize them.

2 Almost all of the fundamental churches listed above, claim that their doctrine and faith is the only true religion in a society of heathens and evil-doers. Almost all these churches were established within the last few hundred years, (at the most), and were organized as a result of strife and disagreement with their original church.

3 As we learn about these organizations, a few questions come to mind. If each of these churches possess the truth, why is there so many of them, and why do they keep reforming? Is the reformation process positive or negative?

4 The answer to the first question is a simple one. There are as many different churches and beliefs as there are people and cultures. And they continue to reform because Truth is ever-evolving. What is true at one point in time, may not be true at the next moment. For example, a group of people look out their window at night and say "Behold, the sky is black!" And the others say, "Yes, we have witnessed it with our own eyes!" At the same time, on the other side of the earth, a group looks out their window at noon and says, "Nay, the sky is as blue as the sea." Naturally the others present agree, for they have seen it also.

5 Assuming these two groups can communicate with one another, each will consider the other utterly wrong. If these people are strong in their convictions, (as most religious people are), there will be conflict and even death and destruction resulting from this closed-minded-ness.

6 Another reason people point fingers of disapproval at others, is to make up for the lack of security

in their own lives. They feel that by condemning the other fellow, and proving how bad he is, they will somehow make themselves good or better. These people have no confidence in their own right. They must trample on others in an (unsuccessful) attempt to elevate themselves.

7 So which faith has the Truth? They all do... to those individuals who founded them, and to those who chose/choose to follow them.

8 Where they go wrong, however, is in saying that they possess the only truth in the entire universe, and all else is bad and evil. Its as if they're saying, (about the body of God), "Oh, I'll take this finger and that leg and maybe that strand of hair, but to hell with the rest of it!" I ask you, can a finger or leg, or any other part of the body function without the rest of the body? No. If it is severed, it simply dies.

9 Now for the question, is the reformation process positive or negative? The answer is both. On one hand, it is negative, for the reasons mentioned above, and as these branches continue to break off the tree they get further and further from the original source of Truth. They seem to lose sight of actual religious experience, and get wrapped up in who's right and who's wrong.

10 Of course, there are positive aspects in reformation. In fact, there is much more vital and positive qualities in reformation than there are negative. The dictionary's description of reformation is as follows: "To change from bad to good, make better morally, restore to former goodness, free from evils or abuses". Life itself is reformation. Thank the spirit of Liberty for reformation! It is so vital and necessary that mankind continue to reform and improve upon themselves and their ways of life, that it cannot be emphasized enough. As more and more changes are made, we come closer and closer to the Truth, provided it is Truth that we really seek.

On the following two pages, you will find a circle surrounded by different churches and their doctrines. This circle illustrates mankind and how the churches have tried to smother us in their "whys" and "wherefores." They have crowded us on every side, to make us believe there is no other way, but through them. They say we cannot live, but through them. We cannot find God, but through them. Baloney!! There is another way! There are thousands of ways! By reading this book and this page and these very words--you are beginning to find your way.

PENTECOSTAL FIRE-BAPTIZED HOLINESS CHURCH

Members of this church are forbidden to buy or sell, or to engage in any labor of business for which they may receive "pecuniary remuneration." They are also forbidden "filthiness of speech, foolish talking or jesting, slang, attendance at fairs, swimming pools, or shows of any kind, the use of jewelry, gold, feathers, flowers, costly apparel, neckties."

The sect is strongly premillennialist and perfectionist; "joyous demonstrations" are prominent, finding expression in hand clapping, crying, and shouting.

BAPTISTS

While they differ in certain minor details, Baptists are generally agreed upon the following principles of faith: the inspiration and trustworthiness of the Bible as the sole rule of life; the lordship of Jesus Christ; the inherent freedom of the individual to approach God for himself; the granting of salvation through faith by way of grace and contact with the Holy Spirit; two ordinance--the Lord's Supper and baptism of believers by immersion; the independence of the local church; the church as a group of regenerated believers baptized upon confession of faith; infant baptism as unscriptural and not to be practiced; complete separation of church and state; the immortality of the soul; the brotherhood of man; the royal law of God; the need for redemption from sin; and the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD, GENERAL COUNCIL

9 Ardently fundamentalist, its theology is Arminian; there is strong belief in the infallibility and inspiration of the Bible, the fall and redemption of man, baptism in the Holy Ghost, entire sanctification, a life of holiness and separation from the world, divine healing, the second advent of Jesus and his millennial reign, eternal punishment for the wicked and eternal bliss for believers. Two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are practiced. Members stand officially opposed to war. They are especially insistent that baptism in the Holy Spirit is evidence by speaking in tongues.

CHURCH OF GOD (ABRAHAMIC FAITH)

The Bible is accepted here as the supreme standard of faith. Adventist in viewpoint, the second (premillennial) coming of Christ is strongly emphasized. The church teaches that the kingdom of God will be literal, beginning at Jerusalem at the time of the return of Christ and extending to all nations. It believes in a literal resurrection of the dead, the reward of the righteous on earth, and the complete destruction of the wicked in second death.

AMERICAN BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

Their doctrine is strictly fundamentalist. Condemning "so-called modern science", they stand for the verbal inspiration of the Bible, the Triune God, the virgin birth and deity of Christ, the suffering and death of Christ as substitutionary, the bodily resurrection of Christ and all his saints. The second coming of Jesus, "physical and personal", is to be the crowning event of the "gospel age"; this second advent will be premillennial. There is eternal punishment for the wicked; salvation is solely by grace through faith and not by law or works. There must be absolute separation of church and state, and absolute religious freedom. (1)

ADVENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Disatisfied with what they felt was a purely historic doctrine of the immortality of the human soul, they rejected it completely and sought a more biblical emphasis, preaching a new doctrine of "conditional immortality", which declared the unconscious state of all the dead until the resurrection at Christ's return, the establishment of a divine tribunal for the determination of rewards and punishments, the ultimate destruction of all evil, and the inauguration of the everlasting kingdom of God upon this earth as a restored Paradise.

PENTECOSTALS

They offer statements of faith which are often long and highly repetitious, but through which may be traced certain common strains and elements. Most of them believe in the Trinity, original sin, man's salvation through the atoning blood of Christ, the virgin birth and deity of Jesus, the divine inspiration and literal infallibility of the Scriptures, manifestations and "blessings" of the working of the Holy Spirit often running into excessive emotionalism-- shouting, trances, jerking, hand clapping, tongue talking, and so forth.

METHODISTS

They preach and teach doctrines of the Trinity, the natural sinfulness of mankind, man's fall and need of conversion and repentance, freedom of the will (1), justification by faith, sanctification and holiness, future rewards and punishments, the sufficiency of the Scriptures for salvation, perfection and the restoring grace of God.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST

They believe in the gift of prophecy in the church; that the dead are awaiting the resurrection in an unconscious state; that the body will be resurrected in the last day, with immortality for the righteous and utter destruction by fire for the wicked. They (supposedly) stand for religious liberty for all men and for the complete separation of church and state. They consider the body of man to be the temple of the Holy Spirit and rigidly abstain from the use of alcohol and tobacco. They believe in the premillennial, personal, visible return of Christ "at a time unknown but close at hand," and in a new earth to be created out of the ruins of the old as the final abode of the redeemed. They practice immersion as the only true form of baptism, and they also practice foot washing as a preparatory service for Communion.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

The people called Jehovah's Witnesses believe that they have in their movement the true realization of the "one faith" mentioned by the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:5.

God, in Witness thinking, will take vengeance upon wicked man in our times; at the same time he is now showing his great love by "gathering out" multitudes of people of good will, whom he will give life in his new world which is to come after the imminent battle of Armageddon is fought. This is to be a universal battle; Christ will lead the army of the righteous, composed of the "host of heaven, the holy angels," and will completely annihilate the army of Satan. The righteous of the earth will watch this battle but will not participate. After the battle a great crowd of people will remain on the earth; these will be believers in God and will be his servants. After the holocaust, "righteous princes" are to rule the earth under Christ. The willfully wicked, being incorrigible, shall not be resurrected at all; once dead, they never awake. One special group--the 144,000 Christians mentioned in Revelation 7 and 14--will make up the "bride of Christ" and rule with him in heaven.

The "J. W.'s", as they are sometimes called, also oppose and attack the teachings of the various churches as false and unscriptural, insisting as they do so that they are attacking not churches or church members as such, but only doctrines and interpretations of scripture which they consider false.

MAN KIND
IS TRAPPED IN HERE

UNIVERSALISM OR CHRISTIANITY

(THE DIFFERENCE)

By Rev. Bob McElroy

1 Universalists do not believe in eternal damnation. This doctrine dates back to the 1st century, and was preached by some of the early Church Fathers. The Roman Catholic Church, however, classified those who followed this belief as heretics.

2 Why? The answer is very simple. The Roman Catholic Church has a vested interest in keeping alive a belief in damnation. This allows it to control its followers by fear, causing them to attend church, confess their sins, and most important, donate money. This has made the Roman Catholic Church rich and powerful, and financed the extending of its field of operations all over the world.

3 Unfortunately, people who are controlled by fear are never really happy. Any system which claims to have the only path to salvation sets up in its followers an "us versus them" philosophy, which leads to conflict with the followers of other faiths, and ultimately to war and destruction. The Crusades are a prime example of the results of such claims.

4 Love is a much better method of exerting control. One who loves all others without qualification will not do anything to hurt them. Those who are raised to believe in traditional Christianity but find themselves unable to follow it tend to flip over the coin and become as evil as possible. (see fig. 1) This is a result of the "us versus them" philosophy mentioned above. But there is a third side to the coin Universalism. (see fig. 2).

Fig. 1.
CHRISTIANITY ————— SATANISM

Fig. 2.
UNIVERSALISM

5 The ancient Greek philosophers tell us that mankind always seeks the good. Since Universal Love is the highest possible goal, all humanity is really seeking this. Through conversations with many people over a number of years, I find that most thinking persons have an instinctive belief in Universalism. The belief is usually not organized, and seldom talked about, as it contradicts the Bible as it is interpreted by those who use fear in the pursuit of their own goals.

6 Universalists have no fear of Hell, and no reason to hate anyone else. It is a people's religion, and if widely accepted, would lead to peace, happiness, and brotherhood for all mankind.

7 This concept disturbs the fear merchants. Universalists have always been persecuted by the establishment as immoral and dangerous. This is because the fear merchants believe that mankind is basically evil, and must be made afraid of the consequences of evil actions in order to be controlled. But this negates one of the basic goals of mankind, freedom, and produces a circular pattern as shown in fig. 3.

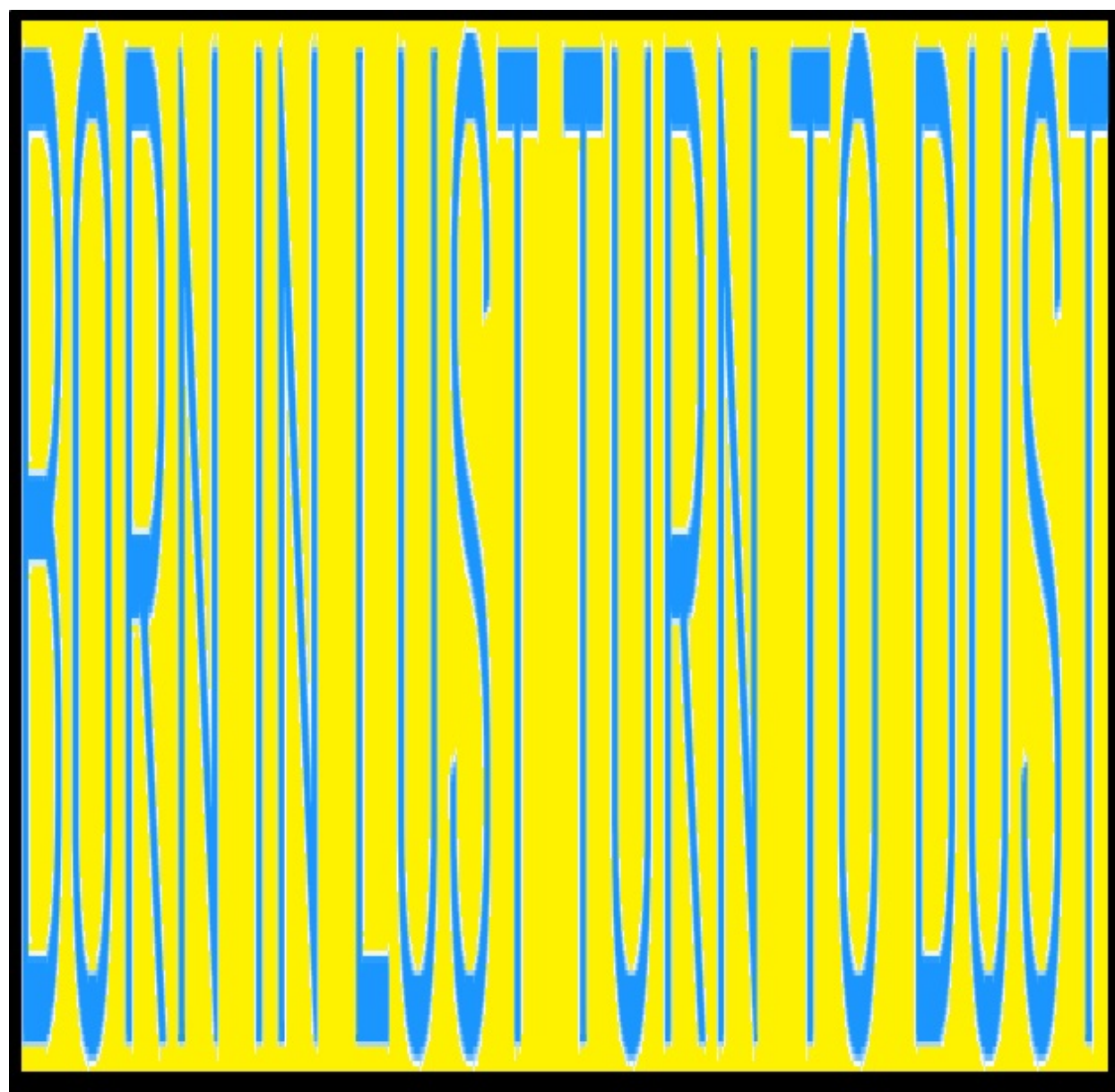
8 Universal love also produces a circular pattern as shown in fig. 4. This produces a much better state of affairs, as any thinking person will agree. So to improve the lot of humanity, it is necessary to spread the doctrine of Universalism. And this is what Bishop Hensley has set out to do. He is succeeding, and for the first time since our race began, there is a solid basis of hope for our species.

Fig. 3.
FEAR
EVIL DEEDS ————— UNHAPPINESS

Fig. 4.
LOVE

THE GOOD'S AN ILLUSION, LITTLE
FABLES PEOPLE TELL THEMSELVES
TO GO THROUGH THEIR DAYS
WITHOUT SCREAMING TOO MUCH.

BORN IN SIN COME ON IN!



YOUR GOD IS AN ILLUSION
A FABLE PEOPLE TELL
THEMSELVES TO GO THROUGH
THEIR DAYS WITHOUT
SCREAMING TOO MUCH!